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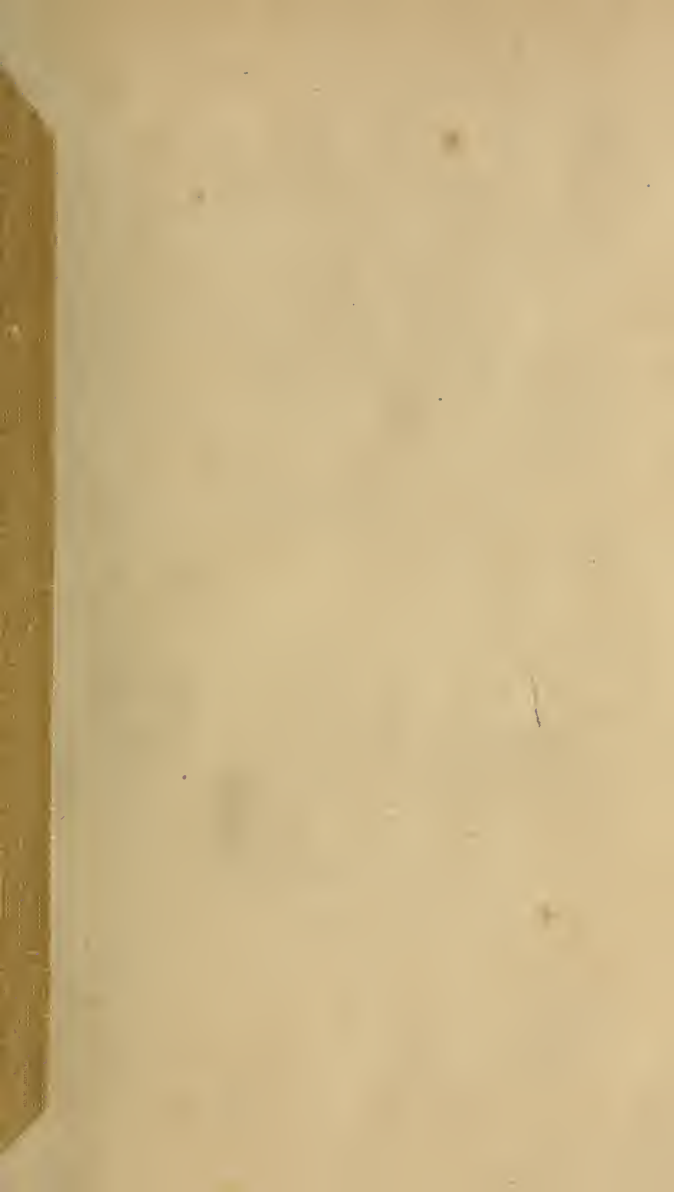
Leigh

The Spirit of the Age

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From the list of

THE
SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

BY CHANDOS LEIGH.

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THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

—o—

Now is the spirit from on high pour'd forth

On man; and where the dragons lay encaved,
Fresh streams of water flow : now triumphs worth, (*a*)

By purple tyranny no more enslaved,

That through the world too long uncheck'd has
raved.

Knowledge her blessings spreads from clime to clime,

Peace smiles where late war's crimson banners
waved; (*b*)

Thought, like an Eagle soaring in his prime (*c*)

Of strength, exulteth now, since zeal for truth's no
crime.

95:2844

The crowning city beautiful appears,
Like a fair bride enrob'd in rich attire,
Glorying in the collected wealth of years,
Outshining, e'en in grandeur, far-fam'd Tyre; (*d*)
She has whate'er man's proudest hopes desire :
Her Merchant-Sons, since fortune favours pride,
To high companionship with kings aspire.
As if instinct with life her vessels glide,
Most glorious to behold, o'er her proud river's
tide.

Her daughters too, whose intellectual grace (*e*)
Heightens their beauty, that they seem to be
Less of a mortal than celestial race,
Are rationally homaged, and more free
Than in the boasted days of chivalry ;
When, closely pent within the castle walls,
Languish'd unseen these dames of high degree,
Till on some gaudy day the lovely thralls,
Like costly idols shone adored in gorgeous halls.

Wisdom is in her halls; to none refused
Are wisdom's precious gifts, as heretofore,
When clerks their knowledge selfishly misused;(f)
All may the tracts of science now explore:
Perish the vain monopoly of lore!
The gloom dispelling radiance of the morn
Delighteth not the rising traveller more,
Than it doth glad my heart, that lofty scorn
Recoils from the repellent strength of wisdom
lowly born.

Oft are those artificial fountains dry,
That skill, for grandeur, labours to create;
But streams, the mountain's natural founts supply,
Flow on for ever beautiful and great;
To give them birth, they need not toys of state;
Thus may the much-forc'd mind of high-born youth,
Prove to the rearer's hand a plant ingrate:
While that which nature nourishes, in sooth,
But partial culture asks to reach the heights of
truth.

Unlike the roll that in the heavens appeared,
 (Wherein and eke without were written "woe
 "And lamentation,") to the Seer revered,
 Is the bright volume wisdom shows us now,
 Where joy and truth in brilliant colours glow.
 Inquiry nerves the mind and quickens thought,
 The source from which our purest pleasures flow.
 Bounds to research there are, which spirits fraught
 With learning's stores would pass; in vain, their
 efforts end in nought.

The mind that thus its boundaries would pass,
 Is as a restless creature in its cage:
 On unforbidden ground, though much it has
 Yet to acquire, still science may engage
 Its fullest powers, or Neibuhr's* novel page!
 Much to unlearn we have, and more to learn,
 As here we journey on to life's last stage,
 Within the confines of our route; why yearn
 For mysteries, which to know e'en Seraphs vainly
 burn. (*g*)

* The celebrated, indefatigable, and liberal German
 Historian of Rome.

Yet to the Sabbath those who toil will look, (*h*)
 And the seal'd volume of a world unseen, (*i*)
 For man has greater charms than Nature's book ;
 Though there are pages for inspection keen
 Unroll'd as yet : Geologists I ween
 Have made but little progress in their lore ! (*k*)
 What shall be known, compared with what has
 been,
 Will be, as if a noon-day sun rose o'er
 This earth, intenser light on favour'd man to pour.

Philosophy is like the ladder high
 In Padan Haram, when in vision blest,
 The Patriarch saw, uprising to the sky,
 And then descending, Angels ; to his breast
 They gave the promise of a glorious rest :
 Thus, by thy aid Philosophy, is man
 Enabled to discern, though care-opprest,
 His relative state of being, since began
 Time to unfold his wings, and life's first current
 ran

Impregnating all space, and mind effused
From its great parent stock, through worlds
above

And worlds around this globe of ours, diffused
Those elements in which all creatures move
And live; the universal bond is love. (*l*)

What pleasure 'tis, in mind, to trace the ties, (*m*)
Numerous as are leaflets in the grove,
That join our quick sensations, as they rise
Fast, as each shadow brief along the mountain
flies.

High speculations are as faintly seen, (*n*)
As the gigantic mountain's shadowy height
When twilight draws her veil o'er such a scene
As heaven unrolls on earth for man's delight,
Late glowing in the sunset's purple light:
All may distinctly gospel truths behold,
They are with ever-living splendours bright:
Thus doth the noon-day sun, in rays of gold,
Along the fertile vale each object fair unfold.

The moral atmosphere doth lighten now

As with a paradise-clearness, thus appear'd

The sky o'er Jordan's stream; a purple glow

Invested heaven and earth as Jesus near'd

That Prophet, whom the Triune effluence cheer'd.

By man, unsocial bigotry may frown,

The bonds of brotherhood are more rever'd

Than in the olden times; is pride o'erthrown?

She quails, though on her head glitters the jewell'd
crown.

Life is a mystery, here we are placed

All on a level, wherefore vaunt the proud?

Have they the genuine form of truth embraced?

If not, in what do they excel the crowd

Whom the thick-coming shades of error shroud?

Oh! not to such vain spirits is it given

To dissipate life's overhanging cloud!

Or to direct for man the way to heaven,

They have too much of earth's all vitiating lea-
ven.

And strongly waxes now the word of God,
And very swiftly runneth through the world
Zeal, potent as the Seer's life-giving rod:
The banners of religion are unfurl'd
Far, and Aherman from his throne is hurl'd. (o)
Through cultur's aid the naked rocks may smile,
Mantled in emerald green, with dew impearl'd;
The seeds of truth shall ripen in each isle,
That now is rank with weeds of superstition vile.

NOTES TO THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.



(a) *Now is the spirit from on high pour'd forth
On man; and where the dragons lay encaved,
Fresh streams of water flow."*

"For in the wilderness shall waters break out,
and streams in the desert.

"And the parched ground shall become a pool,
and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habi-
tation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass
with reeds and rushes."—ISAIAH, XXXV. 6, 7.

"The imperfection of political institutions," says
HUMBOLDT, "may for ages have converted places
where the commerce of the world should be concen-
tered, into deserts; but the time approaches when
these obstacles will exist no longer. A vicious

administration cannot always struggle against the united interests of men, and civilization will be carried insensibly into those countries, the great destinies of which nature itself proclaims, by the physical configuration of the soil, the immense windings of the rivers, and the proximity of the two seas that bathe the coasts of Europe and Africa."

"Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedron doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the tops of the mountains."

"Nosque ubi primus equis Oriens afflavit anhelis,
Illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper."

(b) *Peace smiles where late war's crimson banners waved.*

"The fruits of the spirit are peace," &c.

"The morality of peaceful times is directly opposite to the maxims of war. The fundamental rule of the first is to do good, of the latter to inflict in-

juries. The former commands us to succour the oppressed, the latter to overwhelm the defenceless. The former teaches men to love their enemies, the latter to make themselves terrible even to strangers. The rules of morality will not suffer us to promote the dearest interest by falsehood, the maxims of war applaud it when employed in the destruction of others. That a familiarity with such maxims must tend to harden the heart, as well as to pervert the moral sentiments, is too obvious to need illustration. The natural consequence of their prevalence is, an unfeeling and unprincipled ambition, with an idolatry of talents and contempt of virtue; whence the esteem of mankind is turned from the humble, the benevolent, the good, to men who are qualified by a genius fertile in expedients, a courage that is never appalled, and a heart that never pities, to become the destroyers of the earth. While the philanthropist is devising means to mitigate the evils and augment the happiness of the world, a fellow-worker together with God in exploring and giving effect to the benevolent tendencies of nature, the warrior is revolving in the gloomy recesses of his capacious mind plans of future devastation and ruin. Prisons crowded with captives, cities emptied of their inhabitants, fields desolate and waste, are among his proudest trophies. The fabric of his fame is cemented with

tears and blood, and if his name is wafted to the ends of the earth, it is in the shrill cry of suffering humanity, in the curses and imprecations of those whom his sword has reduced to despair.”—HALL'S *Reflections on War*.

The Discourses of that much-lamented Divine, the Rev. ROBERT HALL, are the most perfect compositions without any exception in the English language.

The mighty BURKE, when with surpassing eloquence he preached up a crusade against republican France, admitted that nothing short of extreme necessity will justify war.

“The blood of man should never be shed but to redeem the blood of man. It is well shed for our family, for our friends, for our God, for our country, for our kind. The rest is vanity, the rest is crime.”
—*Letter on a Regicide Peace*.

(c) *Thought like an eagle soaring in his prime.*

“Methinks I see a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and

shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam, purging and unsealing her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about amazed at what she means."—MILTON'S *Speech for Unlicenced Printing*.

(d) *Out-shining e'en in grandeur fur-famed Tyre.*

“The power of the city of Tyre on the Mediterranean and in the West is well known; of this, Carthage, Utica, and Cadiz are celebrated monuments. We know that she extended her navigation even to the ocean, and carried her commerce beyond England to the north and the Canaries to the south.”
—TAV.

HERODOTUS says that in his time there was a temple dedicated to Hercules, which was enriched with many magnificent donations, especially with two pillars, the one of finest gold, the other of smaragdus; see also PERRY'S *View of the Levant*, page 135.

See the splendid and sublime description of Tyre, in EZEKIEL, chap. 27.

“Tyre was the centre to which all kinds of goods were conveyed, and from which they were again distributed in the districts where each was demanded. The vast gain thus acquired must have left a constantly increasing surplus of wealth, especially of the most compendious kinds of wealth, the precious metals, in that metropolis of the ancient commercial world.”—JACOB, *on the Precious Metals*, vol. 1, page 96.

(e) *Her daughters too.*

In the far-famed days of chivalry the ladies had no real influence, and while their names were passports for every sort of violence on the part of the proud chevaliers, who, self-constituted champions of justice, went about the country inflicting the very wrongs they pretended to avenge;—they themselves were deprived even of the ordinary benefits of education, and were shut out from the enjoyment of air and exercise. They were too costly for ordinary use, and while mocked with the semblances of an

admiration almost amounting to idolatry, were in reality treated like infants. How many weary hours did they endeavour to beguile in employing their delicate fingers on tapestry-work! How seldom were they admitted into the society of their affected worshippers, but real tyrants! Unacquainted with the light accomplishments that give such a grace to the female sex, they knew nothing of those more serious studies that women in the present day pursue with a success truly wonderful.

They had not even that engaging simplicity of character that almost atones for ignorance. Theirs was an affected simplicity, if I may use the term, superinduced by a cold and artificial system of education, and being only intended to shine on particular occasions, they were thrown aside like lumber when the unsubstantial pageantries over which they presided disappeared. But a veneration for the days of chivalry is one of those fallacies that reason will soon dissipate.

(f) *When clerks their knowledge shamefully misused.*

When the Roman Empire became a prey to the Barbarians, they gave up as little as possible of their

ancient independence, and when roused by a sense of real or imaginary wrongs, they were ready at all times to assert with their swords the rights they had inherited from their ancestors.

But in the changes that became necessary in their written laws, in the instructions to public officers for the administration of their internal government, and in the legal forms required for the secure possession and transmission of property, to which they had formerly been strangers, they were compelled to have the aid of provincial churchmen and lawyers, the sole depositories of the religion and learning of the times. These men, trained in the despotic maxims of the imperial law, transfused its doctrines and expressions into the judicial forms and historical monuments of their rulers; and thus it happened that if the principles of imperial despotism did not regulate the government, they found their way into the legal instruments and official language of the Barbarians.—ALLEN'S *Inquiry into the Rise and Growth of the Royal Prerogative*, page 15.

(g)

Why yearn

*For mysteries, which to know e'en Seraphs vainly
burn?*

Ma quell' alma nel Ciel che più si schiara
Quel Serafin, che'n Dio più l'occhio ha fisso

Alla domanda tua non soddisfara :
Perocche si s'innoltra nel abisso
Dell eterno statuto quel che chiedi
Che da ogni, e creata vista è scisso.

DANTE, Canto 21. *Il Paradiso.*

(h) *Yet to the Sabbath those who toil will look.*

“ For all that moveth doth in change delight,
But thenceforth all shall rest eternally
With Him that is the God of Sabaoth hight :
O that great Sabaoth, God, grant me that Sabaoth's
sight !”—SPENSER.

“ But if there be a real and necessary, not merely a shadowy agency in heaven, as well as on earth ; and if human nature is destined to act its part in such an economy, then its constitution, and the severe training it undergoes, are at once explained ; and then also the removal of individuals in the very prime of their fitness for useful labour, ceases to be impenetrably mysterious.

“ This excellent mechanism of matter and mind, which beyond any other of his works declares the

wisdom of the Creator, and which under his guidance is now passing the season of its first preparation, will stand up anew from the dust of dissolution, and then with freshened powers, and with a store of hard-earned and practical wisdom for its guidance, shall essay new labours, we say not perplexities, perils, in the service of God, who by such instruments chooses to accomplish his design of benevolence. . . . Shall not the very same qualities which are here so sedulously fashioned and finished, be actually needed and used in that future world of perfection?"—*Natural History of Enthusiasm*, page 157.

“ The truths which we have been capable of attaining here may still, by that condensation and diffusion of which I have spoken, form an element of that transcendent knowledge which is to comprehend all the relations of all the worlds in infinity, as we are now capable of tracing the relations of the few planets that circle our sun ; and by a similar diffusion, those generous affections which it has been our delight to cultivate in our social communion on earth, may not only prepare us for a purer and more glorious communion, but be themselves constituent elements of that ever-increasing happiness which still prolonging and still augmenting the joys of virtue, is to reward, through immortality, the suffer-

ings and the toils and the struggles of its brief mortal career.”—BROWN'S *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Vol. II. page 311.

(i) *And the seal'd volume of a world unseen.*

“But his peremptory, final, unalterable decree he keeps in the cabinet of the eternal ages, never to be unlocked, till the Angel of the Covenant shall declare the unalterable final sentence.”—JEREMY TAYLOR.

Man, who is of “such stuff as dreams are made of,” is ever anxious to lift up the curtains of eternity, and to discover the secrets of another world; but neither Dante with his “eagles” and his “roses,” nor Davy in the “Vision” that graces the mild and mellow production of his last years, (“Consolations of a Philosopher,”) nor Hope, whose last work (would that instead of it he had left us as a legacy another “Anastaxius,”) only proves the absurdity of human speculations when employed on a subject beyond the reach of human intellect; no, none of these lights of the world can give us a glimpse of our future state of existence.

Vain are all such speculations; all we know is,

that when "an immortal spirit has finished its earthly career," to use the beautiful language of a celebrated preacher, now, alas! no more, "an event has occurred, the issues of which must ever baffle and elude all finite comprehension by concealing themselves in that abyss, that eternity which is the dwelling-place of Deity, where there is sufficient space for the destiny of each among the innumerable millions to develop itself, and without interference or confusion to sustain and carry forward its separate infinity of interest."

(k)

Geologists I ween

Have made but little progress in their lore.

"In those sciences which have attained the highest degree of perfection, the skill of the Creator and the ends and uses of the different parts are most apparent.

"Geology has not yet made sufficient progress to carry us far in this path of enquiry, but we see enough to discover that the very disorder into which the strata on the surface of the globe are thrown, and the inequalities which it presents, are absolutely necessary to its habitable condition."—BAKEWELL'S *Geology*, page 480.

M. Fresnel, M. Arago, and our own illustrious countryman Dr. Young, have made discoveries in the nature of light which enabled Dr. Ure beautifully to illustrate the third verse in the first chapter of the book of Genesis, "Let there be light, and there was light."—See his work on Geology, book 1, chap. 2, *Of Light independent of the Sun*.

Guided by the cautious spirit of inductive philosophy, what may not future philosophers accomplish!

(1) *The universal bond is love.*

" And in that depth
Saw in one volume clasp'd, of love, whate'er
The universe unfolds; all properties
Of substance and of accident beheld
Compounded, yet one individual light
The whole."

Cary's DANTE, *The Vision of Paradise*,
Canto 33, verse 80.

" Terra vero non erat neque aër, nec cœlum, Erebi
autem in infinito gremio,
Omnium primum parit irritum furva nox ovum;
Ex quo temporibus exactis propullavit Amor deside-
rabilis,
Radiens tergo aureis alis, celerimæ ventorum vertigini
similes.

Ille vero alato mistus Chao et caliginoso, in Tar-
tare ingente

Eddidit nostrum genus et primum eduxit in lucem."

Aristop. Aves.

See BRYANT'S interpretation of the above lines in the second volume of his *Mythology*, quarto edition, page 350.

(m) *What pleasure 'tis in mind, &c.*

The principle of association constitutes one of the most active, and may be considered as one of the primary properties in the human mind. Into its agency some philosophers have been inclined to resolve all our mental phenomena. That in mind, as in matter, every change must have a cause, is a truth unquestionable; and that we can generally discover the connecting principles which govern the train of our ideas, is equally true. Yet every person who devotes much attention to the varying states of his own mind, watching its thoughts and investigating their causes, must be conscious that ideas occasionally start up for which it is impossible to account. I am well aware how easily the causes may escape our attention. Our ideas, perceptions, and feelings are frequently of that evanescent nature, and follow one another in such rapid succession,

that, unless arrested for a moment, they elude our recollection. But while this fact is acknowledged, it is at the same time, we believe, a truth, confirmed by every one's experience who makes what passes within himself the subject of narrow and rigid attention, that thoughts, and names especially, often instantaneously present themselves, to which the train of thought immediately preceding and perfectly remembered, has no conceivable relation. A cause must exist, but that cause, we apprehend, cannot always be found in the principle of association."—CROMBIE'S *Natural Theology*, vol. 2, page 14, note.

(n) *High speculations are as faintly seen.*

“ So whoever shall entertain high and vaporious imaginations, instead of a laborious and sober inquiry of truth, shall beget hopes and beliefs of strange and impossible shapes.

“ For the mind of man is far from the nature of a clear and equal glass, wherein the beams of things should reflect according to their true incidence; nay, it is rather like an enchanted glass, full of superstition and imposture, if it be not delivered and reduced.”—BACON.

“ High speculations,” says JEREMY TAYLOR, “ are barren as the tops of cedars, but the fundamentals

of Christianity are fruitful as the valleys or the creeping vine."

"Every mind not infatuated by intellectual vanity must admit that it is only some few necessary points of knowledge, relating to the constitution and movements of the spiritual and infinite world, that can be made the matter of revelation to mankind, and these must be offered in detached portions apart from their symmetry. Meanwhile the vast interior, the immeasurable whole, is not merely *concealed*, but is in itself strictly incomprehensible by human faculties."—*Natural History of Enthusiasm*, p. 308.

(o) *And Aherman from his throne is hurl'd.*

"Aherman.—Cest ainsi que les anciens Persans appelloient le principe du mal, opposé a Ormosd principe du bien.—D'HERBELOT, article *Aherman*.

"In the deep windings of the grove no more
The hag obscene and griesly phantom dwell;
Nor in the fall of mountain stream, or roar
Of winds is heard the angry spirits' yell;
No wizard mutters the tremendous spell,
Nor sinks convulsive in prophetic swoon,
Nor bids the noise of drums and trumpets swell,
To ease of fancied pangs the labouring moon,
Or chace the shade that blots the blazing orb of noon."

BEATTIE'S *Minstrel*, canto 2, stanza 48.





ON THE FALL OF THE LEAVES.



They lie commingling with the earth that late
In rich luxuriance o'er the trees display'd
Their leafy grandeur; in another year
Others will be as beautiful, and sear.
My friends around me fall, by death's rude blast
Blown rapidly away; and some in prime
Of verdant youth. And are they lost amid
The common dust? No. This most lovely eve,
When not a gauze cloud through the atmosphere
Melts gradually away, gives to my heart
A consolation, a prophetic hope
That they shall be again as flourishing
As e'er on earth, in heaven, and happier far.
The after-radiance of the blessed sun
Wakes in my soul a melancholy joy:
I hail the omen, sorrow for the loss
Of dearest friends, but joy that they are blest.

This "woody theatre,"* that circles now
My good old mansion, shall resound no more
With my friends' social laugh, and cheerful horn.
He's gone whose presence dissipated spleen
And head-ache, and the "numerous ills that flesh
Is heir to." While the night-dew damps my brow,
I fancy that I see his presence near,
Smiling with wonted cheerfulness on me :
I know that manly form, but, O! how pale
Those cheeks, that once with health's rich colour
glow'd!

Mild as the moon in the deep blue of heaven
Looks gentleness above the quiet grove,
He looks, dear ——. I'll remember thee
And thy society,—alas, how brief!
And hope again for thy companionship
In worlds which here conjecture vainly strives
To bring before the mind, but worlds of bliss!

October, 1830.

* "A sylvan scene, and as the ranks ascend
Shade above shade, a woody theatre
Of stateliest view."—MILTON.



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